(c) if so, the details of Government's plan to make it attractive and operative and give it wide publicity?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Tourism Department of Andaman & Nicobar Islands has identified 131 hectares of land so far for tourism promotion in various islands.

(c) With a view to attract domestic and foreign tourists to all tourist sites in the country including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, all tourism activities including publicity are being promoted through India tourism offices in India and abroad.

Tourist potential of NE region

757. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NE region has a great tourist potential;

(b) whether the NE States are now poised to welcome tourists; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government to promote tourism in the NE region to boost their economy?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (c) NE Region has great tourism potential with abundance of natural beauty and bio-diversity. States in the region are well poised to cater to incoming tourists. Department of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned number of tourism projects to the NE States for development and promotion of tourism. 10 per cent of the Plan Allocation of the Department has been earmarked for development of tourism in the North-Eastern Region.

Heritage gates of Aurangabad and Ellora

758. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to renovate heritage gates of Aurangabad and Ajanta and Ellora; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Japanese Government has sanctioned funds for development of Ajanta-Ellora etc.; if so, the details of the project; and

(c) whether Japanese or any other foreign agency has sanctioned similar assistance for development/renovation of heritage sites in Orissa; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) No heritage gates at Aurangabad, Ajanta and Ellora are under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

(b) The Japan Bank of International Cooperation has sanctioned a loan of 7331 million Yen for Ajanta Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project, Phase-ll which includes monument conservation, infrastrucutre development and tourism development as per the details given in the enclosed Statement (See below).

(c) No other foreign agency has sanctioned similar assistance for development/renovation of the heritage sites in Orissa.

Statement

Items of work with cost for which loan has been sanctioned by Japan Bank of International Cooperation

Scope of Work	Base Cost (Million YEN)
Monuments Conservation	901
Improvement of Aurangabad Airport	1,487
Afforestation	35
Improvement of roads	454
Water Supply at Tourist Attractions	120
Tourist Complex	1,303
Public Awareness Activities	739
Human Resource Development	23
Computerisation of Tourist Information	44
Microcredit	12
Lonar Conservation and Development	62

Scope of Work	Base Cost (Million YEN)
State Archaeological Monuments	22
Additional sub projects in vicinity of Buddhist caves circuit	580
Contingency	661
Consulting Services	413
Interest during Construction	475
TOTAL :	7,331

Position of India among tourist destinations

759. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite the images of terrorism across the country, India has secured a position amongst the top ten tourist destinations;

(b) if so, the number of foreign and Indian tourists who visited different tourist destinations in each State in India during 2000,2001,2002 and 2003 so far; and

(c) what position India holds amongst the tourist destinations of the world?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) The Readers Award of Condenast Traveller—a leading International Travel Journal has selected India as one of the ten preferred destinations of the world.

(b) A statement indicating State-wise visits of domestic and foreign tourists during the years 2000,2001,2002 and also the latest information available for the year 2003 is given in the Statement (See below).

(c) On the basis of information received from World Tourism Organisation for the year 2002, India ranks, 53rd in international tourist arrivals.